

**Statement of Senator Charles E. Schumer, Chairman
Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
on S. 375, the Campaign Disclosure Parity Act
July 24, 2013**

The Campaign Disclosure Parity Act (S. 375), introduced by Senator Jon Tester with 34 bipartisan co-sponsors, would require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form directly with the Federal Election Commission, just like all other federal candidates. It is identical to S. 219, introduced by Sen. Tester in the last Congress, on which the Rules Committee held a hearing on April 25, 2012. S. 375 requires Senate candidates to file their campaign reports directly with the Federal Election Commission in electronic format, rather than on paper with the Secretary of the Senate.

It is long past time for Senate candidates to file their campaign reports in the same way as every other federal candidate has for years. The Senate current system is stuck in the past. It wastes over half a million tax dollars a year to perpetuate a redundant, slow, and completely unnecessary process that prevents the public from seeing Senate candidates' expenditures for more than a month after other reports are already online. At a time when federal budgets have been slashed and savings are being sought in every line item, there's no reason for this to continue.

S. 375 will eliminate duplicative efforts. Senate candidates now submit their campaign filings in print form to the Secretary of the Senate, Office of Public Records. In 2012, the Secretary of the Senate received 6,617 FEC reports for Senate candidates and processed a total of 620,205 individual report pages for FEC filing. The Office of Public Records manually scans and indexes each page and transmits the scanned images to the FEC via the Internet.

The FEC then prints out the reports and adds notes. The FEC sends this information to an outside vendor to key all the data into an electronic format. The vendor submits the electronic files to the FEC, and they are posted to the FEC website in a searchable form. Candidates for all other Federal offices simply submit their filings in electronic format directly to the FEC and those reports are immediately available to the public on the FEC's website.

S. 375 will improve timely public access. Once a report is received by the Office of Public Records, it takes up to 48 hours for it to be manually processed and sent to the FEC. It then takes an additional 48 hours for the report to be posted on the FEC website in an unsearchable "photocopy" format, and 30 days for the report to be processed by the vendor and displayed on the FEC's searchable public database. Additional delays may occur because of security screening of all mail coming into the Senate.

S. 375 will improve accuracy by disclosing information provided directly by campaigns, rather than introducing errors caused by the vendor re-keying data. The bill also will end redundancy. Both the Secretary of the Senate's Office of Public Records and the FEC process the same information for public disclosure. The FEC alone can do it under this bill, and do it faster and cheaper.

This legislation has a bipartisan group of 34 co-sponsors, 29 Democrats and 5 Republicans, including eight Members of the Senate Rules Committee.

I urge all of us to support this bill that saves nearly \$500,000 a year and brings Senate candidates' disclosures into the 21st century simply by making them the same as every other federal candidate. No amendments were filed for consideration at today's markup. It is my intent to reconvene the Rules Committee soon to continue this markup and report this bill out of Committee before the August recess.